MARKED-UP VERSION OF THE AMENDED CLAIMS

(Version with markings to show changes made)

1. (previously presented) A method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat comprising

placing a coin into a coin acceptance device of an entertainment automat;

testing the coin in a coin testing device;

displaying symbols on a symbol display device, wherein a displayed symbol combination comprises several symbols and wherein upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance in a credit balance counter disposed on the side of the control unit in the following a symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device;

controlling the course of the game with a control unit including a microcomputer and a pseudorandom number generator;

influencing the course of the game by an operational element disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat;

substituting a symbol by another randomly determined symbol;

renewing the symbols within a predetermined time window until a winning carrying symbol combination is reached; and

accumulating the obtained winning in a credit balance counter.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising

networking a second entertainment automat to the first entertainment automat;

simultaneously switching the played entertainment automats (1) into a uniform game mode upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance state of a common credit balance counter;

determining in a game mode the entertainment automat, which has reached the highest winning value within a time window predetermined by the control unit;

coordinating the winning value to that entertainment automat, which entertainment automat has reached the highest winning within the time limited game mode.

3. (previously presented) A method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat comprising

inserting payment into an automatic entertainment automat;

activating a game time after receiving the payment by the automatic entertainment machine;

randomly drawing all cards;

determining if a game time has ended;

displaying the winning values in case the game time has ended;

determining if a key has been depressed in case the game time has not yet ended;

determining if the depressed key is a hand out key or a hold key in case a key had been depressed;

randomly drawing cards not being held in case the hand out key had been depressed;

holding cards in case the hold key had been depressed;

actualize the intermediate state;

determining if a certain winning combination had been reached;

randomly drawing again all cards if the certain winning combination had been reached;

determining again if the game time has ended if the certain winning combination had not been reached.

4.   (previously presented)   The method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat according to claim 3 further comprising

determining if a special symbol combination or a jackpot winning value has been reached after inserting payment into the automatic entertainment automat.

5.   (previously presented)   The method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat according to claim 3 further comprising

networking a second entertainment automat to the first entertainment automat;

determining which one of the entertainment automats assumes a master function;

determining which one of the entertainment automats assumes a slave function;

determining if a jackpot filling level has reached a predetermined release amount;

starting a jackpot game at the entertainment automat performing the slave function;

waiting till the slave is ready;

activating the game time for the entertainment automats;

randomly drawing all cards;

determining if a game time has ended;

collecting the game results of the slave entertainment automat in the master entertainment automat;

distributing of the game results to the slave entertainment automat by the master entertainment automat;

calculating of the winning amount;

displaying the winning amount.

6.   (previously presented)   The method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat according to claim 5 further comprising

sending a readiness signal to the master entertainment automat;

waiting by the slave entertainment automat for an activation of the game time through the master entertainment automat.

7.   (previously presented)   A method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat with a coin acceptance device and a coin test device, a symbol display device and a control unit for controlling the course of the game, wherein the control unit includes a microcomputer and a

pseudorandom number generator, wherein the game course can be influenced by an operational element disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat, and wherein a displayed symbol combination comprises several symbols, and wherein a symbol can be substituted by another randomly determined symbol,

wherein upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance in a credit balance counter disposed on the side of the control unit in the following a symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device (2), and wherein the symbols can be renewed within a predetermined time window, until the winning carrying symbol combination is reached, and wherein the obtained winning is accumulated in the credit balance counter.

8.   (original)   The method according to claim 7, wherein the entertainment automats (1) are networked together, and wherein the played entertainment automats (1) are simultaneously switched into a uniform game mode upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance state of a common credit balance counter, wherein in the game mode is determined at which entertainment

automat (1) the highest winning value is reached within a time window predetermined by the control unit (7), and wherein the winning value is coordinated to that entertainment automat (1), which entertainment automat (1) has reached the highest winning within the time limited game mode.

9.   (previously presented) A method for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat comprising

placing a coin into a coin acceptance device of an entertainment automat;

testing the coin in a coin testing device;

displaying symbols on a symbol display device, wherein a displayed symbol combination comprises several symbols and wherein upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance in a credit balance counter disposed on the side of the control unit in the following a symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device;

controlling the course of the game with a control unit including a microcomputer and a pseudorandom number generator;

influencing the course of the game by an operational element disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat;

substituting a symbol by another randomly determined symbol;

renewing the symbols within a predetermined time window until a winning carrying symbol combination is reached;

accumulating the obtained winning in a credit balance counter; and

switching simultaneously the coin actuated entertainment automats disposed in the network into a common supplemental game when a predetermined value of a common jackpot is surpassed.

10.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 1, further comprising

monitoring a credit balance state with a first operational block exhibiting a game stake;

monitoring the total playing time by a second operational block;

randomly determining winning symbols during the complete game time by a control unit;

illustrating and displaying the randomly determined winning symbols with a symbol display device;

activating a first branching block by a third operational block for determining the remaining residual game time;

determining in a second branching block in case of a presence of remaining residual game time, if an operating element furnished on the front side of the entertainment automat has been actuated;

performing a return to the first branching block in case of an absence of an operating element activation.

11. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising

determining which operational element was actuated in case of an activation of an operational element;

presenting card symbols with the symbol display device;

drawing not held cards by new cards determined randomly from the card storage in a fourth operational block;

determining a winning value of a displayed symbol combination;

displaying the winning value in a fifth operational block;

checking in a third branching block, if the maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device;

holding the winning symbols displayed with the symbol display device upon remaining of a residual game time can be held in the following by activation of an operational element;

performing a return from the third branching block to the first branching block upon checking if the game time has ended;

determining an actualized winning value in case of an ended game time in a sixth operational block;

performing a return from the sixth operational block to a first operational block by checking, if a further credit balance state for basing a further game stake is present.

12. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising

determining symbol combinations randomly in case of a credit balance state exhibiting a game stake in the credit balance counter of the entertainment automat;

performing a switch over from a base game into a supplemental game by a control unit in case a predetermined winning value is coordinated to the

symbol combination displayed by the symbol display device or if a particular

symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device;

determining in a branching block if a preset jackpot winning value has been

reached or surpassed for a predetermined symbol combination.

13.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 1, further

comprising

monitoring a total game time by an operational block;

randomly determining winning symbols by a control unit during a total game

time;

displaying the randomly determined winning symbols with the symbol

display device;

activating a branching block by an operational block for determining the

remaining residual game time;

checking in the branching block in case of a presence of remaining residual

game time, if an operational element present on the front side of the

entertainment automat has been actuated;

performing a return to a branching block in case of no actuation of the

operational element;

checking which one operational element was actuated in case of an actuation of the operational element;

checking in the branching block 45, if a maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device;

performing a return upon non-reaching of the maximum winning value from one branching block to a second branching block, wherein the game time is checked in the second branching block;

displaying winning symbols with the symbol display device upon remaining of a residual game time;

holding the display of the winning symbols by actuating of the operational element or throwing out all up to now held cards by actuating an entry block.

performing a return from the one branching block to the second branching block by checking if the game time has ended;

determining an actualized winning value in an operational block in case of an ended game time, and displaying actualized winning value with a coordinated display means; performing a return from a second operational block to a third operational block by checking if a further credit balance state sufficient for a game stake is present.

14. (previously presented) The method according to claim 2, further comprising

initiating a network by actuating the power switch of each entertainment automat;

assuming of the master function by one of the entertainment automats, wherein the master function comprises essentially that a coordination of the entertainment automats present in the network is performed with respect to the collection of data through the counter state of the jackpot amount and the release of a common special game, which takes place at all entertainment automats present in the network at the same time;

switching the second entertainment automat present in the network to a slave function;

randomly determining a symbol combination in an operational block and displaying the symbol combination in the symbol display device in case of a sufficient credit balance state;

transferring an adjustable shared part amount of the game stake of each base game to a common jackpot counter;

checking the counter state of the jackpot counter in a branching block following to a determination of the winning value in the base game;

sending from the master a control signal to all other entertainment automats present in the network if the predetermined jackpot counter state is reached or surpassed, wherein the slaves switch to the supplemental game based on the control signal after termination of the base game;

monitoring in an operational block, if an okay signal was returned by all slaves;

starting the supplemental game at the same time in all participating coin actuated entertainment automats.

15. (previously presented) The method according to claim 2, further comprising

activating an entertainment automat in case of a credit balance state exhibiting a game stake;

monitoring a total game time by an operational block;

randomly determining winning symbols by a control unit and displaying the winning symbols with the symbol display device within the total game time;

activating a branching block for determining the remaining residual game time by the operational block;

checking in a branching block if an operational element disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat was actuated in case of a presence of remaining residual game time;

performing a return to the branching block if no operational element actuation took place;

checking in case of actuation of the operational element which operational element was actuated;

determining and displaying a game result of the displayed symbol combination in an operational block;

determining in a first branching block if a maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device;

performing a return from the first branching block to a second branching block 39 case of a non-reaching of the maximum winning value; and

checking the game time in the second branching block.

16.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, further comprising

performing a return upon reaching of the maximum winning value from a branching block to an operational block, wherein new winning symbols are

randomly determined in the operational block and are displayed with the symbol display device;

displaying winning symbols in case of a remaining residual game time with the symbol display device and holding the winning symbols in the following by actuating the operational element or throwing out all up to now held cards by actuating an entry block;

performing a return from the first branching block to the second branching block;

checking in the second branching block, if the game time has ended.

scanning the individual results of the slave entertainment automats are scanned by the entertainment automat turned master in case of an ended game time;

accumulated the incoming game results by the master;

communicating the incoming game results from the master to the slaves;

determining the winning value in the following in an operational block;

displaying the determined winning value with the coordinated display means of a respective entertainment automat;

performing a return from an operational block displaying the winning value to a second operational block checking the game stake.

17. (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, further comprising

initiating a network by actuating the power switch of each of the entertainment automats, wherein one of the entertainment automats assumes a master function;

switching further entertainment automats contained in the network to slave operation; wherein the slave function comprises essentially that predetermined data are transmitted continuously to the master after request;

randomly determining a symbol combination in an operational block in case of a sufficient credit balance state;

displaying the determined symbol combination with the symbol display device;

transmitting an adjustable share part of the stake of each base game to a common jackpot counter;

checking in a branching block, if an instruction is present from the master to start thereupon a supplemental game following to the determination of the winning value in the base game;

confirming a receipt of the instruction of the start of the supplemental game to the master;

activating the entertainment automat in case of a credit balance state exhibiting at least a game stake;

checking by an operational block, if the master signal for the special games is present;

randomly determining winning symbols by a control unit during the complete game time;

displaying the determined winning symbols with the symbol display device;

activating a first branching block for determining the remaining residual game time by an operational block;

checking in a second branching block, if an operational element furnished on the front side of the entertainment automat was actuated;

performing a return to the first branching block in case no actuation of an operational element took place and in case of a presence of a remaining residual game time.

18.   (previously presented)   The method according to claim 2, further comprising

checking which operational element was actuated in case of an actuation of an operational element;

determining a game result of the displayed symbol combinations;

displaying the determined game result in the operational block;

determining in a branching block if a maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device;

performing a return from a first branching block to a second branching block in case of a non-reaching of the maximum winning value;

checking the game time in the second branching block;

performing a return from the first branching block to a second operational block;

performing a return upon reaching of the maximum winning value, wherein new winning symbols are randomly determined in the second operational block and wherein the new winning symbols are displayed with the symbol display device;

displaying winning symbols with the symbol display device in case of a remaining of residual game time;

holding the winning symbols in the following by actuating the operational element or throwing out all up to now held cards by actuating the entry block;

performing a return from the first branching block to the second branching block by checking if the game time has ended;

performing a return from a third operational block to a fourth operational block by checking if a further credit balance state sufficient for a game stake is present.

19. (new) A system for operating a coin actuated entertainment automat comprising

a first entertainment automat;

a second entertainment automat, wherein the first entertainment automat and the second entertainment automat are forming a network and are simultaneously switched, and

means for configuring the network connected to the first entertainment automat and to the second entertainment automat, wherein the first entertainment automat and the second entertainment automat are at the same time playing a base game, and wherein a predetermined wining combination or a predetermined winning value is reached in the base game, whereupon a supplemental game is activated upon a trigger value on the first entertainment automat and on the second entertainment automat.

20. (new) The system according to claim 19,

wherein the first entertainment automat is furnished with a first additional operating element, wherein the first additional operating element is associated to each presented winning symbol and each presented winning symbol can be held in the following by action of the first operating element, and wherein the first entertainment automat includes a first separate processor and first software;

wherein the second entertainment automat is furnished with a second additional operating element, wherein the second additional operating element is associated to each presented winning symbol and each presented winning symbol can be held in the following by action of the second operating element, and wherein the second entertainment automat includes a second separate processor and second software.

21. (new)   The system according to claim 19, wherein one of the first entertainment automat and of the second entertainment automat performs a master function, and wherein the entertainment automat

performing the master function drives the supplemental game which is performed on the first entertainment automat and on the second entertainment automat.

22. (new)   The system according to claim 21, wherein the entertainment automat performing the master function accumulates a jackpot amount as an adjustable shared part of the game stake of each base game, and wherein the entertainment automat performing the master function scans individual game results and subdivides the jackpot winning amount.

23. (new)   The system according to claim 19 further comprising a display means furnished as a central large display field, wherein the display means displays the temporary jackpot value.

24.   (new)   A network of entertainment apparatuses comprising

a first symbol display device;

first operating elements disposed near the first symbol display device;

a first opening for receiving coins, tokens or banknotes;

a first payment unit;

a first control unit connected to the first symbol display device, to the first

operating elements, to the first opening and to the first payout unit;

a first symbol game device connected to the first control unit;

a first video controller having a symbol memory storage and connected to the

first symbol display device and to the first control unit;

a first read-only memory including

a first pseudo random number generator program,

a first winning value recognition program,

a first display control program and

a first winning plan program;

a first communications board associated with the first control circuit;

a first serial interface disposed at the first communications board;

a second symbol display device;

second operating elements disposed near the second symbol display device;

a second opening for receiving coins, tokens or banknotes;

a second payment unit;

a second control unit connected to the second symbol display device, to the

second operating elements, to the second opening and to the second payout

unit;

a second symbol game device connected to the second control unit;

a second video controller having a symbol memory storage and connected to the second symbol display device and to the first control unit;

a second read-only memory including

a second pseudo random number generator program,

a second winning value recognition program,

a second display control program, and

a second winning plan program;

a second communications board associated with the second control circuit;

a second serial interface disposed at the second communications board;

a cable connecting the first serial interface to the second serial interface;

wherein a determination is set as to what game stake part is to be delivered to the jackpot.

25.   (new)   The network of entertainment apparatuses according to claim 24, wherein the first symbol display device displays the temporary jackpot value;

wherein the second symbol display device displays the temporary jackpot value;

wherein the first control unit performs an automatic recognition for determining which control unit assumes a master function and which control unit assumes a slave function;

wherein the second control unit performs an automatic recognition for determining which control unit assumes a master function and which control unit assumes a slave function;

wherein a jackpot prerelease value is set;

wherein the jackpot is frozen upon reaching of the jackpot prerelease value; and

wherein a jackpot playout game is started at the first control unit and at the second control unit.

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 18 continue to be in the case.

New claims 19 through 25 are being submitted. The new claims 19 through 25 are based on the language of the specification. In particular, claim 24 refers to pages 8 and 9 of the specification.

The Office Action refers to Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Vancura. Vancura discloses Gaming Machines with Bonusing. In his game he teaches the playing of a bonus game in a secondary machine adjacent to a primary machine. Vancura's invention substantially teaches the limitations as claimed.

Applicant respectfully traverses.

Claims 1-9 of the present application are clearly not anticipated or rendered obvious by the reference United States Patent 6,033,307 (Vancura). According to the claims 1-9 and the specification of the present application, beginning page 3, last paragraph and ending page 4, last paragraph, the present application furnishes a supplemental game, which is played on all networked entertainment automats.   These automats are simultaneously switched into a common supplemental game, as is disclosed for example, in the specification of the present application on page 5, lines 9-10.

The reference United States Patent 6,033,307 (Vancura) teaches a bonus game ("game within a game") on the secondary slot machine. This is seen at the specification of Vancura (6,033,307) col.4, lines 53-64. The reference Vancura (6,033,307) uses only two slot machines (a primary and a

secondary slot machine). These machines were placed "adjacent" that is confirmed by the specification of Vancura (6,033,307) col.5, lines 10-13 "the term adjacent as used herein, means on-top-of each other, side-by-side to each other, or near each other whether in the same housing or in separate housings." Moreover only one, a secondary slot machine plays the bonus game, see the reference Vancura claim 1.

Applicant urges that applicant's steps as required in the claims 1-9 of the present application cannot be performed in the conventional secondary bonus game machine of Vancura despite the allegations in the Office Action. The Office Action further continues to assert:

Referring to Claim 1, 3, 7 & 9

Vancura teaches:

• that the primary machine acts as a traditional slot machine (col. 18, lines 22-24).

• that the primary gaming machine can be a suitable gaming machine, such as, slot, poker, keno etc.; and

the accumulating of winnings in an award meter (col. 17, lines 44-54).

Applicant respectfully traverses.

According to the present application the gaming machine exhibits features, which go beyond those of a traditional slot machine. The gaming machines of the present application present additional procedural and operating elements. These procedural and operating elements allow the players to influence the game by holding or changing the individual symbols.

This can be clearly recognized from the specification of this application page 3, lines 16-17; page 8, lines 3-4; page 22, line 21-22 and page 25, lines 13-15. Therefore the winning award depending on the skill of the players according to the present application.

Nowhere in the reference United States Patent 6,033,307 (Vancura) is depicted any operating elements, which allowed the players to influence the game by holding or changing the individual symbols.

According to the present invention the jackpot forms as a share part amount of the game stake of each base game. This jackpot is accumulated and if the jackpot amount reaches a predetermined limiting value, then a supplemental game is started. This is distinctly explained in the specification of this application page 14, first paragraph; page 20, lines 14-16; page 28, lines 19-21 and page 24, lines 5-7.

Moreover, according to the present application the jackpot winning amount is subdivided among the players according to the individual results. Compare the description of this application page 26, lines 16-18; page 27 lines 7-12 and Fig. 7(blocks 68,69).

The reference United States Patent 6,033,307 (Vancura) teaches that the bonus game starts at zero credits as seen col.5, lines 36-37. Vancura does not accumulate any jackpot at the time of the base game and hence Vancura does not have an initial value of a jackpot.

This feature of the present invention clearly distinguishes the claims 1,3,7 and 9 of the present application from the Vancura reference USP 6,033,307 .

The Office Action further continues and asserts.

Referring to Claim 2 & 8

Vancura teaches:

• a secondary machine (claim 1);

• a bonus qualifying signal, to play a bonus game on the secondary machine, when a predetermined combination of symbols is obtain (col. 18,

lines 24-28);

• determining the winning values and accumulating winnings in the specific winning machine (claim 1).

Applicant respectfully traverses.

In the present application all coin entertainment automats are:

- of the same construction type (see, for example, the present specification page 19, lines 19-22);

- being played the supplemental game simultaneously and at the same time as the present specification discloses on page 20, lines 9-11.

Each coin entertainment automat according to the present invention can carry out a master function or a slave function as is set forth in the present specification page 12, lines 10-22.

According to Vancura only the secondary slot machine is played as a bonusing gaming machine. This is confirmed at column 18, lines 26-29 of the Vancura reference (6,033,307), " a bonus qualifying signal 30 to active an adjacent bonusing secondary gaming machine 20".

The teaching of the Vancura reference (6,033,307) therefore does not anticipate or render obvious the claims 2 and 8 the present application as these claims specify steps not present in the reference Vancura.

The Office Action further continues and asserts:

Referring to Claim 4

Vancura teaches:

• a bonus-qualifying event determined after the primary machine is activated (col. 3, lines 18-20 and col.4, lines 55-64).

Applicant respectfully traverses.

The present application discloses an invention which includes several coin entertainment automats of the same type and wherein the coin operated entertainment automats are connected into a communications network. Such construction offers the multimaster capabilities and a jackpot game starts at all automats (see, for example, the application fig.5 block 53). According to the present application each automat contains its own central processor unit

and software. The specification of the present application page 11, last paragraph and page 12, lines 13-22 also confirm this invention feature. Therefore, according to the present application every automat may realize a master function. In the present application the supplemental game begins when the automat is activated (connected to the network and having sent a signal ready state) as seen in the present application, Fig.6 (block 60) and Fig.5 (block 54).

According to the Vancura reference USP 6,033,307 col. 5, lines 5 to 8, a single processor unit (520) is used. As seen from fig. 5 of USP 6,033,307 this processor unit is incorporated into the secondary slot machine. Consequently according to Vancura neither a secondary bonusing gaming machine nor a primary slot machine do operate independently.

This feature of having alternate masters and slaves clearly distinguishes the present application from the Vancura reference USP 6,033,307.

The Office Action further continues and asserts:

Referring to Claim 5 & 6 Vancura teaches: a secondary machine (claim 1); the use a processor to facilitate all the functions of the primary (master) and secondary (slave) machines (see figure 50); a bonus/jackpot (claim 12);

- collecting the game results of the secondary machine in the primary machine (col. 16, lines 62-67);

- that the primary machine can be used as a slot, poker or keno machine (col. 5, lines 14-20).

Applicant respectfully traverses.

The present invention discloses a coin actuated entertainment automat which comprises two or more gaming machines which are simultaneously switching and playing as seen in Figs. 2 and 3 of the present application. This configuration is set with a personal-computer as follows from the application page 13, line 9. The gaming machines can be playing a base or a supplemental game independently as seen in Figs. 7 and 8 of the present application. Each of the gaming machines has a separate processor and software. Each of the gaming machines can receive the status of the master function, can accumulate and subdivide the winning amount.
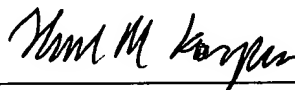
As these features are absent from the teaching of the Vancura reference, applicant respectfully submits that claims 5 and 6 are deemed to define the present invention over the Vancura reference.

Reconsideration of all outstanding rejections is respectfully requested.

Entry of the present amendment is respectfully requested. All claims as presently submitted are deemed to be in form for allowance and an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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